



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Digital Projects for the Public

Deadline: June 10, 2015 (for projects beginning January 2016)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.164

Items referred to in this document needed to complete your application:

- ☐ Budget instructions
- ☐ Budget form
- ☐ Grants.gov application package and instructions

Also see the **application checklist** at the end of this document.

Questions?

Contact the staff of NEH's Division of Public Programs at 202-606-8269 or publicpgms@neh.gov. Hearing-impaired applicants can contact NEH via TDD at 1-866-372-2930.

Submission via Grants.gov

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. NEH strongly recommends that you complete or verify your Grants.gov registration at least two weeks before the application deadline, as it takes time for your registration to be processed.

System for Award Management Entity records

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, the applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM). You must therefore review and update the information in your Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your information or another award term. In order for you to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award,

or receive payment on an award, the information in your Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record [here](#). You may need a new SAM User Account to register or update your Entity record. NEH strongly recommends that applicants update (or, if necessary, create) their SAM Entity record at least four weeks before the application deadline.

I. Program Description

Digital Projects for the Public grants support projects that significantly contribute to the public's engagement with the humanities. (You can find a more detailed description of the humanities [here](#).)

Digital platforms—such as websites, mobile applications and tours, interactive touch screens and kiosks, games, and virtual environments—can reach diverse audiences and bring the humanities to life for the American people. The program offers three levels of support for digital projects: grants for Discovery projects (early-stage planning work), Prototyping projects (proof-of-concept development work), and Production projects (end-stage production and distribution work). While projects can take many forms, shapes, and sizes, your request should be for an exclusively digital project or for a digital component of a larger project.

All Digital Projects for the Public projects should

- deepen public understanding of significant humanities stories and ideas;
- incorporate sound humanities scholarship;
- involve humanities scholars in all phases of development and production;
- include appropriate digital media professionals;
- reach a broad public through a realistic plan for development, marketing, and distribution;
- create appealing digital formats for the general public; and
- demonstrate the capacity to sustain themselves.

All projects should also demonstrate the potential to attract a broad, general, nonspecialist audience, either online or in person at venues such as museums, libraries or other cultural institutions. Applicants may choose to identify particular communities and groups, including students, to whom a project may have particular appeal.

NEH also welcomes applications for nonpromotional digital components of a larger project. For these projects, you should explain how the digital platform will enrich the users' learning experience and engagement. For instance, if your request is for a mobile experience that would operate within a museum or would work in conjunction with a film, you should explain how this project element will substantially add to the audience's learning experience.

Grant categories

Grants are available to support research, to design or create prototypes of digital projects, and to produce the actual projects. Projects must be intended for a broad American audience. Three levels of support are available: Discovery, Prototyping, and Production. Applicants are not

required to obtain a Discovery grant before applying for a Prototyping grant, or to obtain a Prototyping grant before applying for a Production grant.

NEH encourages potential applicants to contact the staff of NEH's Division of Public Programs at 202-606-8269 or publicpgms@neh.gov for advice on choosing the appropriate grant level.

Discovery grants (for up to \$30,000) are designed to fund the exploratory stages of a digital project. Activities must include consultation with scholars, refinement of the humanities themes, analysis of potential platforms, and initial development work.

Discovery grants may be used for

- content research and narrative development;
- consultation with humanities scholars;
- platform research and selection;
- identification or digitization of production assets;
- preliminary design;
- audience evaluation;
- user experience mockups; and
- storyboarding.

Discovery grants should culminate in the creation of a written design document that details fundamental aspects of the project such as the content, format, technical specifications, budget, work plan, intended audience, and learning objectives. The design document should serve as a roadmap for prototyping the project. Instructions for completing a Discovery grant application are available [here](#) (PDF).

Prototyping grants (for up to \$100,000) support the creation of a proof-of-concept prototype. Proposals for Prototyping grants must include a [design document](#) (PDF) that describes the project's platform, user interface, design, and the ways in which the project's central humanities ideas will be conveyed. Prototyping grants should result in a digital prototype that explains the key digital features and humanities content of the project. These completed prototypes do not need to have finalized or designed each and every asset, but they should demonstrate the project's technological feasibility and design through screenshots, videos, mockups, or other illustrations. In the case of transmedia projects that utilize multiple formats, the prototype should feature two or more of the project's chosen platforms.

Prototyping grants may be used for

- refinement of humanities content;
- consultation with scholars and digital media experts;
- finalization of the platform;
- scripting;
- creation or digitization of audiovisual assets;
- user interface and backend development;
- testing (including early launches) and de-bugging;

- final design;
- audience evaluation; and
- other activities that will advance the project towards the production stage.

Instructions for completing a Prototyping grant application are available [here](#) (PDF).

Production grants (for up to \$400,000) support the production and distribution of humanities projects that have a primarily digital format. Applicants must submit a design document and a prototype that demonstrate a solid command of the humanities ideas and scholarship related to the subject. The prototype must also show how the narrative, audiovisual, and interactive elements function to bolster an audience's experience of the project's humanities ideas. NEH expects that by the conclusion of the grant period, the project team will have fully produced the project and distributed it for widespread audience use.

Production grants may be used for

- ongoing consultation with scholars;
- additional research and writing;
- fine-tuning the hardware, software, and platform;
- final design, production, and distribution of digital media projects;
- finalization of script and/or audiovisual assets;
- rights and licensing fees for audiovisual assets;
- production of complementary components such as museum displays;
- publication of complementary materials, such as catalogs and curriculum guides;
- publicity, outreach activities, and public programs; and
- project evaluation.

Instructions for completing a Production grant application are available [here](#) (PDF).

Digital Projects for the Public awards may not be used for

- archival efforts, preservation, online encyclopedias, cataloguing of materials and collections, digitization of archives, and/or databases without a strong narrative or interpretive element (applicants interested in such projects should consult the Division of Preservation and Access grant programs [here](#));
- the purchase of art, artifacts, or collections;
- the purchase of hardware or software exceeding 20 percent of the total grant award;
- the development of software, platforms, or user experiences that do not directly serve the proposed project (for grant opportunities supporting innovation in digital humanities, please see the [Digital Humanities Implementation Grants](#) and [Start-up Grants](#) programs);
- general operations, renovation, or construction of production facilities; and
- programs designed to persuade audiences of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view.

User-generated content

NEH funds cannot be used to support obscene, libelous, indecent, or defamatory content (including hate speech, personal attacks, or material constituting harassment). Projects receiving NEH funds must demonstrate how user-generated content would be monitored.

Sample projects

The Division of Public Programs welcomes a wide range of digital projects. The sample projects described below only hint at the range of projects that this program could support.

1. A digital media producer received a **Discovery** grant to begin the creation of interactive stations to accompany an exhibition on the history of town-building during westward expansion. The museum exhibition would bring together photographs, maps, and artifacts to examine the boom-and-bust story of western towns. The proposed interactive stations would allow visitors to explore nuances of the exhibition's themes by including an immersive town-building digital table, a documentary editing booth with archival photographs and film footage, an interactive map featuring the West's demographic data, and a large digital screen displaying visitors' personal migrations in the West. The Discovery grant was used for consultations with scholars and digital designers and programmers. The grant period culminated in the creation of a design document.
2. A team of historians from a university working with a game company received a **Prototyping** grant to produce and disseminate a multipart digital game about the Civil War. The game would allow players to assume the role of a Union soldier, a white Confederate farmer, or an enslaved African American. The game would include player-controlled text-based conversations that impact events, mini-games that highlight crucial decision points, and correspondence sent to players' e-mail that resembles front-line letters sent home. Accompanying the game would be a website highlighting supplementary images, audio, and archival resources such as newspapers and letters. The Prototyping grant was used to consult with scholars on the content and stories, writers to help storyboard the game scenarios, and an archivist to identify primary sources. At the end of the year-long grant period, the project team created a rich prototype of the game outlining technological and narrative components, evaluated audience interest, and began to put in place ideas for distribution through libraries and high schools.
3. An archaeologist who specializes in ancient Mayan archaeology received a **Prototyping** grant through her museum to begin work on a Web-based project to recreate several excavated sites. This project would interpret the historical and cultural significance of the sites and allow users to explore reconstructed architecture from a first-person perspective, highlighting the ways that the real-world landscape was designed to tell complex stories. Working with a team of scholars and digital designers, the team utilized a previously completed design document to build a 3-D environment that includes various opportunities for users to access and manipulate objects, trigger audio descriptions of areas of significance, and watch film clips of historical excavations and other activities. The Prototyping grant was used to consult with scholars, choose the appropriate graphics engine, produce digital media assets, and test Alpha prototypes with users.

4. A public television station received a **Production** grant to produce an interactive, GPS-based mobile application exploring the meanings of New Deal murals in its city. In addition to offering a rich array of historical material (photographs, drawings, and archival video and audio recordings), the app would allow users to access video of art historians, painters, and historians discussing the meanings of the individual murals throughout the city. Users could also upload their own stories or photographs. An innovative map interface would link the mural's site to broader themes related to the history of labor, immigration, and the city's creation of public spaces. The digital media elements would enable audiences to explore the subject in greater depth and would encourage dialogue between users and humanities scholars. The Production grant enabled final research, scripting of content, design of the mobile app and companion website, editing of short videos, and publicity and outreach.

Humanities and science and technology

The Division of Public Programs encourages projects that examine connections between the humanities and science and technology. The humanities offer significant insight into scientific discovery, scientific thinking, and the historical, cultural, and ethical implications of various technologies. Projects might provide the historical and social contexts for scientific developments, to illuminate how science is produced and scientific information is consumed. Alternatively, projects might analyze how technological innovation helps reshape cultures and understandings of our place in the world. Projects might also discuss the ethical and political implications of scientific and technological developments. Proposals must demonstrate sound humanities and science scholarship. Projects must involve collaboration between the project team and advisers drawn from the humanities and the sciences.

The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square

NEH invites projects related to its new initiative, The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square. This initiative seeks to connect the study of the humanities to the current conditions of national life. Many of today's challenges require more than ever the forms of understanding and knowledge represented by the humanities. They require the broadest possible engagement of scholars and the public with the resources of the humanities, including but not limited to the study of language, literature, history, philosophy, comparative religion, and ethics. The study of the humanities can help illuminate the complexity of many contemporary challenges while enriching our understanding of the common good.

Note that the Common Good initiative incorporates the [Standing Together](#) initiative, which encourages projects related to war and military service.

More information about the Common Good initiative is available [here](#).

All applications will be given equal consideration in accordance with the program's evaluation criteria, whether or not they examine connections between the humanities and science and technology or respond to the Common Good initiative or the Standing Together initiative.

EDSITEment

Digital Projects for the Public supports the creation of curricular materials and educational resources, as part of a broader project. NEH's [EDSITEment website](#) is a respected source of educational materials for the classroom. NEH encourages applicants to create resources that would be appropriate for publishing on EDSITEment or promotion through EDSITEment.

Providing access to grant products

As a taxpayer-supported federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its awards available to the broadest possible audience. Our goal is for scholars, educators, students, and the American public to have ready and easy access to the wide range of NEH award products. NEH gives preference to those projects that provide free access to the public, when possible. You can find detailed guidance on access and dissemination matters in the "Distribution expectations and rights" section below.

Evaluation

NEH encourages audience evaluation throughout all stages of a project.

Evaluation could include testing of the project's concept, approach, and key components.

NEH requires a final report that assesses how well the finished project met its goals. If the project is produced, the final report must include information on the project's reach (size of audience) and impact. NEH particularly wants to know how fully the project met its stated learning goals and how audiences were more deeply engaged in thinking about humanities ideas and questions as a result of the project.

Acknowledgment of NEH support

NEH requires crediting for any program based on or incorporating the materials created with these awards, including any works derived from those materials. All grantees are expected to comply with NEH's credit requirements. For digital projects, grantees are required to include an acknowledgement of NEH support in any promotional descriptions of the project.

Distribution expectations and rights

Once production is completed, NEH expects that projects will be offered for distribution to broad public audiences, so that the American public will have ready and easy access to the products of NEH awards. NEH must approve all distribution arrangements before they are finalized.

While the grantee owns the rights to the products of the grant, NEH reserves a nonexclusive and irrevocable right to use materials produced under a grant and to authorize others to use these materials for federal purposes. For more information on NEH's rights to grant products, please see [Article 23 of the General Terms and Conditions for Awards](#).

Program income

Award recipients are required to report income earned from grant products during the grant period and for seven years following the end of the grant. In addition, a percentage of income earned during this period must be returned to NEH. The percentage is based upon the proportion of the total project costs that NEH supported. For further information, please see the [NEH Program Income Policy](#).

II. Award Information

Awards are made for a period of one to three years and may range up to \$30,000 (for Discovery grants), up to \$100,000 (for Prototyping grants), and up to \$400,000 (for Production grants).

Successful applicants will be awarded a grant in outright funds, matching funds, or a combination of the two, depending on the applicant's preference and the availability of funds.

(Learn more about [different types of grant funding](#).)

Cost sharing

Cost sharing includes cash contributions to a project by the applicant and third parties, as well as in-kind contributions, such as donated goods and services. Cost sharing also includes gift money raised to release federal matching funds. Although cost sharing is not required, this program is rarely able to support the full costs of projects approved for funding.

Other award information

A grant from NEH for one stage of a project does not commit NEH to continued support for the project. Applications for each stage of a project are evaluated independently.

III. Eligibility

Any U.S. nonprofit organization with IRS tax-exempt status is eligible, as are state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribal governments. Individuals are not eligible to apply. Individuals who wish to apply for NEH funding in this program must seek an eligible organization to sponsor the project and submit the application to NEH. Under this arrangement the sponsoring organization is considered the grantee of record and assumes all attendant responsibilities of a grantee organization.

NEH generally does not award grants to other federal entities or to applicants whose projects are so closely intertwined with a federal entity that the project takes on characteristics of the federal entity's own authorized activities. This does not preclude applicants from using grant funds from, or sites and materials controlled by, other federal entities in their projects.

Applicants may not submit multiple applications for the same project at the same deadline. If an application for a project is already under review, another application for the same project cannot

be accepted. Applicants drawing substantially on a previous project should demonstrate how the proposed project will reach new audiences and expand on existing content.

All application materials must be received by the application deadline. Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be reviewed.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Application advice and proposal drafts

Please keep in mind that the Division of Public Programs funds content first and format second. In other words, your application must convey a solid grasp of its subject and the related scholarship. Tell us why your proposed subject matters and demonstrate that the formats are a good match for it. Don't leave it to the reader to make connections that should be explicit.

Applicants are encouraged to contact program officers, who can answer questions about the review process and review preliminary drafts. NEH recommends that drafts be submitted at least six weeks before the deadline, so that staff will have adequate time to respond. A response cannot be guaranteed if drafts arrive after this date. Although staff comments are not part of the formal review process and have no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, applicants to other programs have found them helpful in strengthening their applications. Draft proposals are optional; if you choose to submit one, send it as an attachment to an e-mail message to publicpgms@neh.gov or to an individual program officer.

Applicants should consult the sample applications (some of which include a design document as well as a narrative), which are available on the [program resource page](#).

The [Discovery](#) (PDF), [Prototyping](#) (PDF), and [Production](#) (PDF) grant categories have different application requirements. Please click on the appropriate instructions for details on preparing your application. If you have questions about which grant category is appropriate for your project, please contact the staff of NEH's Division of Public Programs at 202-606-8269 or publicpgms@neh.gov.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

The application must be submitted to Grants.gov. Links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package can be found on the [program resource page](#).

HOW TO SUBMIT SAMPLES (AND, FOR PRODUCTION APPLICATIONS, PROTOTYPES)

We prefer work samples (and, for production applications, prototypes) to be submitted as hyperlinks. If your sample or your prototype is not available at a URL, please send **eight copies of a readable disk**. Each copy of the sample and each copy of the prototype (both the case and the disk) must be labeled with the name of the project director, the name of the applicant institution, the title of the project, and the title of the work sample. Send eight copies of the sample (and, for production applications, eight copies of the prototype) to

Digital Projects for the Public
Division of Public Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8269

NEH continues to experience lengthy delays in the delivery of mail by the U.S. Postal Service, and in some cases materials are damaged by the irradiation process. We recommend that samples and prototypes be sent by a commercial delivery service to ensure that they arrive intact by the receipt deadline.

DEADLINES

Applications must be received by Grants.gov on or before June 10, 2015, for projects beginning in January 2016. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Applications submitted after that date will not be accepted. **Samples must also arrive at NEH on or before June 10, 2015, to be considered as part of the application.**

V. Application Review

Applications are evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. **Humanities content**

The likely contribution of the project to public understanding of the humanities, including the significance of the subject and the humanities ideas; the quality and relevance of the humanities scholarship informing the project; and the extent to which the project offers an analytical perspective on the themes and ideas that underlie it.

2. **Humanities advisers**

The qualifications and potential contributions of the advising scholars.

3. **Creative approach, format, technical design, and sustainability**

For Discovery applications: the quality and viability of the plan for exploring and choosing a digital platform.

For Prototyping applications: the quality of the narrative and the project's creative approaches; the likelihood that the chosen format(s) will effectively convey the humanities content to a broad, general audience in an engaging and thoughtful manner; the quality of the project's technical design.

For Production applications: the quality of the narrative and the project's creative approaches; the likelihood that the chosen format(s) will effectively convey the humanities content to a broad, general audience in an engaging and thoughtful manner; the quality of the project's technical design; the quality of the prototype in demonstrating the potential for creative and technical success; the sustainability of the project (as demonstrated by the proposed lifecycle of the project and any plans for its future use).

4. Project resources

The quality of the materials and resources that support the project's interpretive themes, ideas, and formats.

5. Digital team

The demonstrated technical skills and creative approach of the digital team, the quality of the team's previous work, and the likelihood of successful completion of the proposed project; evidence that institutional partners (if any) will collaborate effectively.

6. Work plan

The likelihood that the applicant will achieve the project's goals in a timely and efficient manner.

7. Budget

The appropriateness and reasonability of the project's costs.

8. Audience, distribution, and evaluation

The quality of the project's distribution plan and the likelihood that the proposed project would appeal to a broad, general audience. For Prototyping and Production applications, the likely effectiveness of the proposed audience evaluation for measuring the project's reach and impact.

Review and selection process

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman on grants. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available [here](#).

VI. Award Administration Information

Applicants will be notified of decisions by e-mail in December 2015. Institutional grant administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents by e-mail in January 2016. Award documents will identify the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements that pertain to successful applications. The [Grant Management](#) section of the NEH website outlines all the responsibilities of award recipients, including anti-lobbying restrictions, in great detail. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their applications by sending a letter to NEH, Division of Public Programs, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20506, or an e-mail message to publicpgms@neh.gov.

VII. Points of Contact

If you have questions about the program, contact:

Division of Public Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8269
publicpgms@neh.gov

If you need help using Grants.gov, refer to

Grants.gov: <http://www.grants.gov>
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-resources.html>
Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)
Grants.gov [troubleshooting tips](#)

VIII. Other Information

Privacy policy

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the grant application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

Application completion time

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that the average time to complete this application is fifteen hours per response. This

estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at guidelines@neh.gov; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ❑ **Verify and if necessary update your institution's Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM).** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.
- ❑ **Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with Grants.gov.** Complete at least two weeks before deadline.
- ❑ **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The [program resource page](#) on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. You can also search Grants.gov for this program. The program resource page includes a direct link to the instructions for completing the package.
- ❑ **Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.**
 1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational
 2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs
 3. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form
 4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach the parts of your application as described in the guidelines:
 - ATTACHMENT 1: Table of contents (name the file “contents.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 2: Application narrative (name the file “narrative.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 3: Bibliography (name the file “bibliography.pdf.”)
 - ATTACHMENT 4: Résumés and letters of commitment (name the file “resumes.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 5: Description of your work sample (name the file “sample.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 6: Budget (name the file “budget.pdf”)

ATTACHMENT 7: Images, if applicable (name the file “images.pdf”)

ATTACHMENT 8: Design document, required only for Prototyping and Production grants (name the file “design.pdf”)

ATTACHMENT 9: Prototype, required only for Production grants (name the file “prototype.pdf”)

5. Budget Narrative Attachment Form—Using this form, attach **only** a copy of the applicant institution’s current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an agreement). (See the Grants.gov instructions for institutional applicants, which are available on the [program resource page](#), for additional information.)

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). We cannot accept attachments in their original word processing or spreadsheet formats. If you don’t already have software to convert your files into PDFs, many low-cost and free software packages will do so. You can learn more about converting documents into PDFs [here](#).

Upload your application to Grants.gov. NEH ***strongly*** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on [federal holidays](#)), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to support@grants.gov.